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Security Council

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Letter dated 12 December 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the attached communication dated 7 December 2012 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, transmitting the progress report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and the annex thereto to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-Moon

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Annex

Letter dated 7 December 2012 from the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2011) and 2069 (2012), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2012 (see enclosure). I would appreciate if you would make this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the United Nations on the Operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to the request under Security Council resolution 2069 (2012), informs the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2012.

2. Since the last reporting period (see S/2012/692), the total number of ISAF troops has decreased, in accordance with NATO redeployment planning. There are currently around 106,800 personnel in theatre, provided by 28 NATO countries and 22 non-NATO countries.

3. NATO reiterates the invitation to additional United Nations Member States to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing advisers and trainers for the Afghan National Security Forces. Additionally, United Nations Member States are invited to provide funding support to the Afghan security forces, and to the civilian sectors of governance and development.

4. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 August to 31 October 2012, ISAF suffered 817 casualties, including 72 killed in action, 740 wounded in action and 5 non-battle-related deaths. In the same period, the Afghan security forces suffered 2,078 casualties, including 560 killed in action and 1,420 wounded in action.[1]

5. During the reporting period, the number of reported security incidents was generally in line with seasonal trends. The total number of security incidents was slightly down when compared to the same period in 2011. Insurgent efforts to maintain their operational tempo with high profile attacks and assassinations were largely ineffective owing to a combination of Afghan and ISAF operations. As a result of improved effectiveness of the Afghan security forces, the insurgency did not regain lost territory and the majority of Afghans remained unaffected by insurgent attacks.[2]

6. During the reporting period, the insurgency was responsible for approximately 94 per cent of total civilian casualties.[3] ISAF continues to work with the Afghan security forces to make every effort to protect the Afghan population and to prevent and mitigate civilian casualties.

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[1] This Afghan security forces casualty data is for information purposes only. It reflects the information made available to ISAF and could differ from official numbers published by the relevant Afghan authorities.

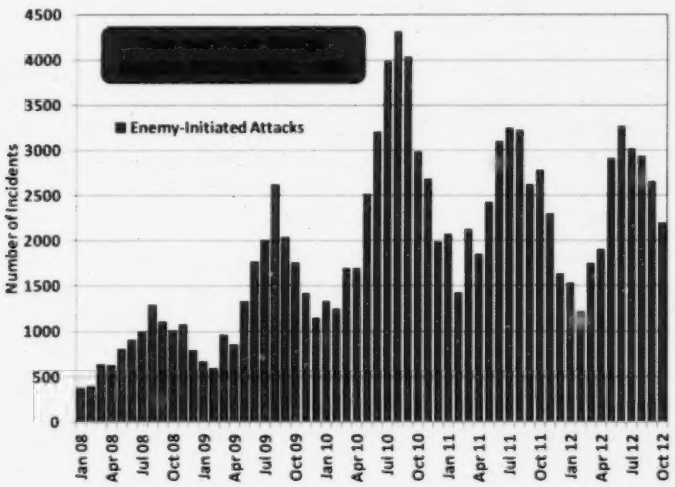
[2] From January to October 2012, 80 per cent of enemy-initiated attacks took place in areas where only 18 per cent of the population lives.

[3] Total civilian casualties refers to confirmed civilian casualties directly attributable to either ISAF or insurgent military action; ISAF-caused civilian casualties figures include road traffic accidents.

7. During the reporting period, ISAF, supported by the international community, started to prepare to transfer those tasks that it will no longer perform after 2014 to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan or other national or international agencies, as appropriate.

Security situation

8. During the reporting period, enemy-initiated attacks[4] declined 10 per cent when compared to the same quarter in 2011. The insurgents continued to avoid decisive engagements and gave priority to the use of improvised explosive devices. Assassination attacks against officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan continued, as the insurgents attempted to disrupt the Government's ability to carry out effective governance and provide security. The insurgency continued to mainly affect the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan, with 90 per cent of security incidents[5] being reported within Regional Command Southwest, Regional Command South and Regional Command East. Insider attacks remain a major challenge for ISAF and the Afghan security forces, as the attacks have the potential to strain the relationship between the Afghan security forces and ISAF.



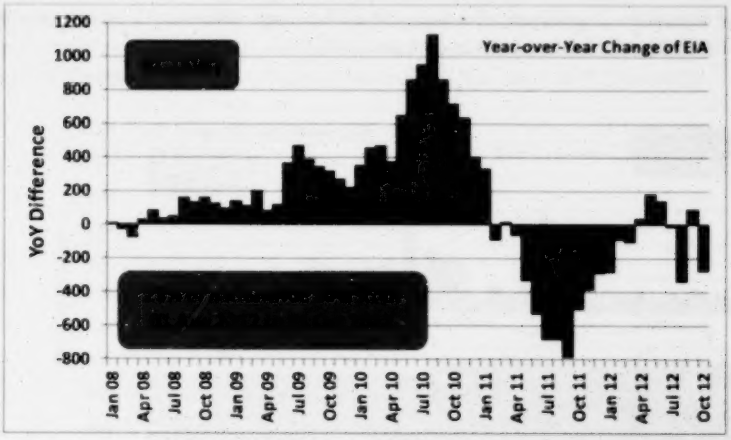
9. Regionally, the security situation is as follows:

(a) Regional Command Southwest. Enemy-initiated attacks for the reporting period decreased by 19 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The central Helmand River Valley was the most contested area in Regional Command Southwest. Despite the efforts of the Afghan security forces and ISAF, the security situation in Northern Helmand Province continued to be influenced by insurgent activity. Afghan security forces and ISAF operations resulted in a slight, but steady, decrease in the number of security incidents in the region. This area will remain

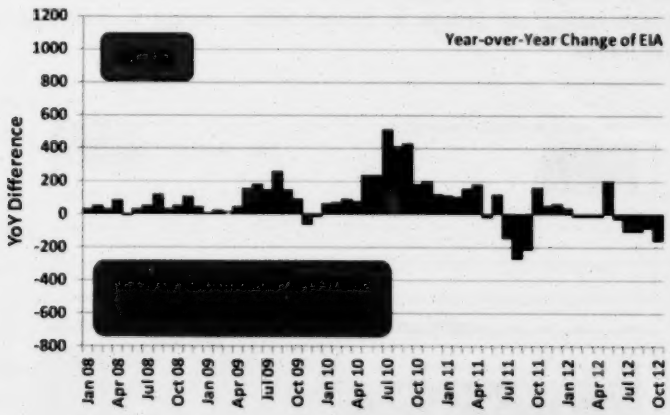
[4] EIA comprise enemy action (enemy-initiated direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire) and explosive hazard events, to include executed attacks only (improvised explosive device (IED) explosions/mine strikes).

[5] Security incidents comprise all IIAs and include in addition potential IEDs attack, namely IEDs and mines that were found and cleared, as well as premature IED detonations and IED turn-ins.

significant for the insurgency, and ISAF assesses that the insurgents will continue their attempts to regain their lost powerbase.

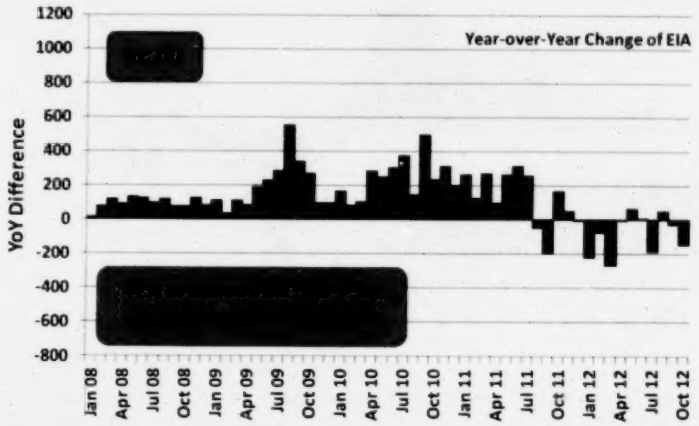


(b) Regional Command South. Enemy-initiated attacks for the reporting period decreased by 18 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. Insurgent attempts to regain influence, recapture lost safe havens, and re-establish freedom of movement failed as a result of improved capabilities of the Afghan security forces and the success of combined team operations. Direct fire remained the primary means of engagement, followed by improvised explosive devices. As in other Regional Commands the insurgents will seek to increase assassinations of Afghan security forces and officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in an attempt to undermine the local population's perception of security.

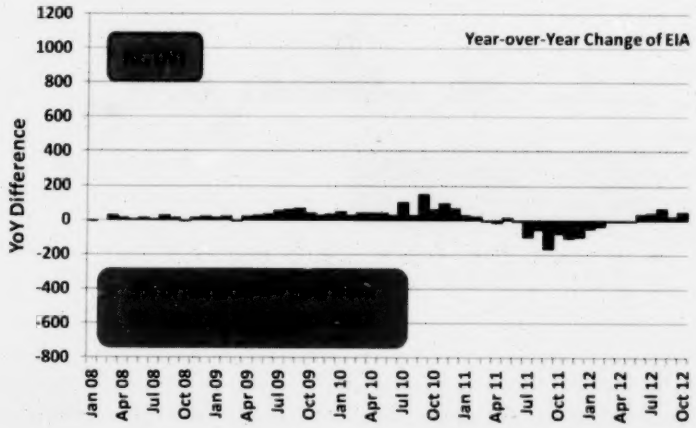


(c) Regional Command East. Enemy-initiated attacks in the reporting period decreased by 4 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The insurgency in Regional Command East is assessed to be more fragmented when compared to other Regional Commands, mainly owing to the geography and differences in intent and

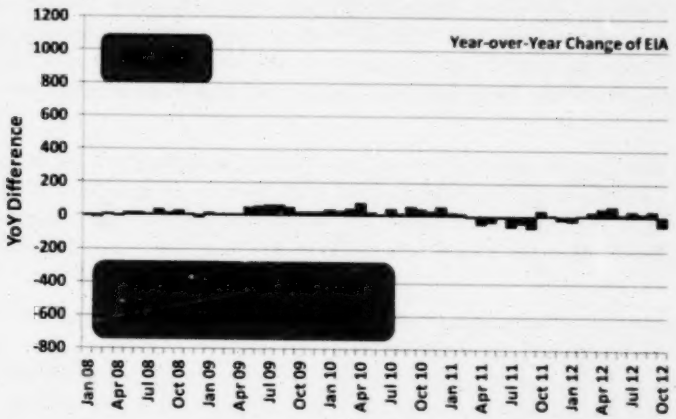
agenda of each insurgent group. The border situation significantly influences insurgent activity in Regional Command East. The lack of improvement in a unified approach to cross-border incidents, from both sides of the border, allows the insurgents to maintain significant freedom of movement, allowing them to use the border area for both criminal and insurgent activities.



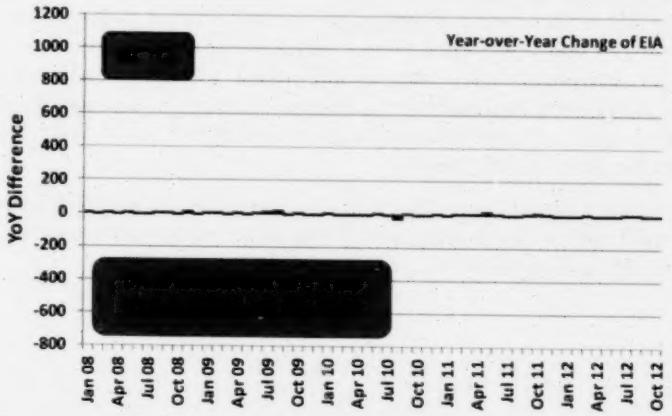
(d) Regional Command North. Although enemy-initiated attacks in the reporting period increased by 63 per cent compared to the same period in 2011, they remained low in comparison to most Regional Commands. The insurgency is unlikely to sustain a significant and centralized effort within Regional Command North, owing to the continuous pressure from the Afghan security forces and the National Directorate of Security. Facing increased effectiveness of the Afghan security forces, the insurgency reacted with high-profile attacks resulting in many civilians casualties (such as the attack in Maimanah on 26 October). The complex web of interests, where the insurgents' interests often intersect with the local powerbrokers and smuggling groups in border areas, remain a challenge for the Afghan security forces.



(e) Regional Command West. Enemy-initiated attacks in the reporting period increased by 5 per cent compared to the same period in 2011, while remaining low in comparison to most Regional Commands. This increase is largely owing to increased Afghan security forces/ISAF security operations, forcing the insurgents to react. Insurgent attacks to disrupt the freedom of movement of ISAF and Afghan security forces will likely continue throughout the west of Afghanistan.



(f) Regional Command Capital. Enemy-initiated attacks in the reporting period remained low and decreased by 40 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The suicide attack in the green zone of Kabul City on 8 September, causing serious civilian casualties, was the most significant event. Effective Afghan security and ISAF operations continued to disrupt insurgent attack plans in Kabul City, and the Afghan security forces responded effectively to security incidents when they occurred. Kabul Province will likely continue to be the target of attempted high-profile attacks, owing to the significant media and subsequent political attention they receive.



Afghan National Security Forces

10. As Afghanistan entered tranche 3 of the transition process, the Afghan security forces assumed security lead for over 75 per cent of the Afghan population. Meanwhile, the Afghan security forces continued to grow in overall force size and met their October 2012 goal of recruiting a force of approximately 352,000 soldiers and police. However, these figures include a number of Afghan security forces who were recruited but are still awaiting induction into their respective training centres. With the quantitative goal reached, Afghan security forces development will now be primarily focused on the consolidation of the Afghan lead for security, professionalization of the force and the fielding of newly established army and police units.

11. During this quarter, the Afghan security forces increasingly took the lead in conventional operations across Afghanistan, leading over 80 per cent of the total operations, while the number of ISAF-led operations decreased simultaneously. However, as the Afghan security forces came to the fore, they sustained increased casualties.

12. The operational effectiveness[6] of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police continued to improve, with 30 Afghan National Army and 49 Afghan National Police units currently rated as "independent with advisers", the highest total to date. A new assessment cycle is currently under way and will likely confirm this positive trend. ISAF assesses that adviser teams are important for fostering Afghan leadership and improving overall effectiveness of the Afghan security forces.

13. The decision to initially grow the Afghan security forces (force size), followed by a focus on "balancing the force" through the development of enablers and professionalization of the ranks, was made several years ago with an understanding that it would entail risk along the way. The Afghan security forces, once built to size, would, for instance, suffer from logistics and other shortfalls. The Afghan security forces continues to require enabling support, including air (both transport and close support), logistics, medical, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance from the Coalition to perform at the level necessary to produce all the security effects required for transition. Non-commissioned officer shortages in the Afghan security forces also remain a challenge, with the Afghan National Army requiring an additional 7,000 non-commissioned officers and the Afghan National Police requiring an additional 9,400 non-commissioned officers. Additionally, overall attrition in the Afghan National Army remains a concern, as it was higher than the predicted 1.4 per cent per month for five of the past six months, and exceeded 2 per cent for three straight months.

14. Overall the Afghan National Security Forces has progressed significantly, but continues to face challenges to its development. ISAF is currently addressing these issues, but they will require a medium- to long-term effort.

[6] Afghan security forces units are assessed as "*Established*", "*Developing*", "*Effective with Partners*", "*Effective with Advisors*" or "*Independent with Advisors*".

Afghan National Army

15. During the reporting period, the Afghan National Army grew in size to approximately 182,209 (not including 15,068 soldiers in training, the Afghan Air Force and civilian personnel). There are 352 women in the Afghan National Army (not including 20 in training). The Afghan National Army unit fielding plan will be completed in late 2013. With the growth of the Commandos and Special Operation Forces, and with the addition of special aviation and elite mobile strike force units, the newly formed Afghan National Army Special Operations Command grew from a brigade-sized element to the first division-sized Special Operation Forces unit in Afghan military history. Approximately 10,000 personnel are under the command of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command, which is becoming the key operational element, successfully pressuring the insurgency across the country.

16. Despite certain challenges, the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan strives to professionalize the Afghan security forces. Averages of 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers are in training every day and 8,000 complete training every month. With 2,552 Afghan trainers, the Afghan National Army is becoming less dependent on the Coalition Forces and construction has begun on the Afghan National Army Officers Academy. The Academy is scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2013 and will create a training facility that will prepare new officers for leadership roles within the Afghan National Army. The Academy will have the capacity to train 1,500 officer candidates a year.

Afghan Air Force

17. Afghan Air Force development is under way. The force comprises 96 aircraft, 54 of which are helicopters. There are 6,224 personnel (not including 512 in training) assigned to the Afghan Air Force, and the force remains on track towards its end-strength at 8,000 in December 2014. There are 27 women in the Afghan Air Force. Currently, 62 Afghan pilots are assigned to operational flying units. There are 95 pilots in training, 81 student pilots are training abroad in various stages and 14 are in training at Shindand Air Base.

18. On 15 October 2012, Shindand Air Wing graduated its first fixed-wing pilots in over 30 years; these three pilots are the first to complete the fixed-wing undergraduate pilot training programme since the beginning of the NATO air training mission for Afghanistan, which started in 2007. Key challenges to totally autonomous Afghan Air Force operations before 2014 are investments in (and sustainment of) new hardware, continued development of Afghan Air Force leadership, and Light Air Support (legacy Mi-35) and Medium-range Airlift (C-27/G222) operations.

Afghan National Police

19. After temporarily halting recruitment of new patrolmen in order to train and promote new non-commissioned officers, the Afghan National Police will likely achieve its target of 157,000 personnel by February 2013. It reached 147,158 personnel (not including 5,696 in training) in late September (1,455 of whom are women).

20. The professionalization of the police and intensive training efforts allow the Afghan National Police to graduate an average of 3,600 policemen per month. Able

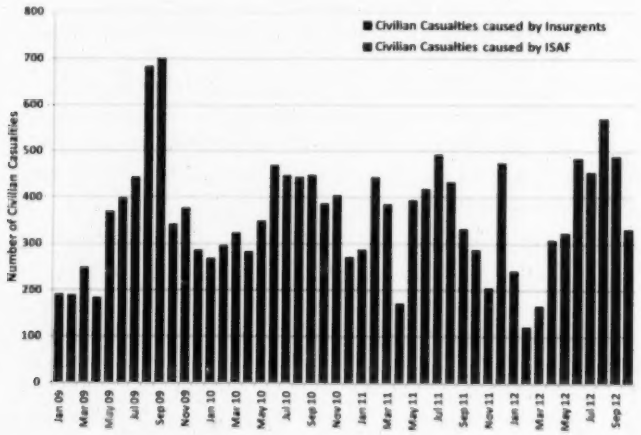
to rely on a full network of training centres, the Afghan National Police is diversifying its own operational capabilities in intelligence, counter-narcotics, anti-crime, medical, fire, traffic and training areas. On 20 September 2012, 69 Afghan National Police officers graduated from the first entirely Afghan-led Officer Candidate School without any support from Coalition advisers.

21. Compared to previous reporting periods, the Afghan National Police is currently more professional and balanced, is steadily improving its operational effectiveness, and is able to meet the requirements to take the lead for security in transitioned areas.

Civilian casualties

22. Overall, civilian casualties continue to be of significant concern to ISAF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Minimizing the number and scale of civilian casualty incidents remains of critical importance to ISAF. Moreover, the need to effectively manage the consequences of such incidents when they occur is also considered as vitally important.

23. Considering ISAF-caused and insurgency-caused civilian casualties during the reporting period, the number of confirmed civilian casualties this year is 33 per cent higher than in 2011 (1,394 compared to 1,048). Reporting indicates that insurgents are responsible for causing 94 per cent of these civilian combat-related deaths, and are responsible for 91 per cent civilian casualty incidents.



24. During this same reporting period, ISAF was identified as responsible for only 9 per cent of civilian casualty-related incidents, which is representative of a continued decreasing trend. The number of civilian casualties caused by ISAF this year is 48 per cent lower than in 2011. However, insurgents can still exploit and manipulate events related to civilian casualties to their advantage, since ISAF appears to be held accountable by the Afghan population for all incidents where civilian casualties occur.

25. As ISAF hands over more of the security responsibility to the Afghan security forces, it is assessed that the numbers of ISAF-caused civilian casualties will continue to decrease.

Counter-narcotics

26. In conjunction with the international community, ISAF continues to provide support to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's counter-narcotics programmes and operations directed against facilities and facilitators supporting the insurgency in Afghanistan. ISAF continues to be a key enabler of the Afghan civilian and law enforcement counter-narcotics efforts, and also supports critical economic development and governance programmes through the indirect provision of security.

27. At the end of the reporting period, farmers harvested the cannabis and began planting poppy in the main producing areas of the south and south-west, which account for over 90 per cent of the poppy cultivated in Afghanistan. ISAF currently has limited data on the results of the poppy eradication conducted in 2012. However, the 154 per cent increase in eradication in 2012 did result in an initial reduction of the opium output, as farmers in Badakhshan and Helmand Provinces harvested early in the belief that eradication efforts were a credible threat. However, some of the successes of the eradication campaign were negated by local corruption, such as the Afghan security forces eliciting bribes in exchange for protection from eradication. Moreover, in spite of the increase in the eradication, the poppy-cultivated area increased by 18 per cent.

28. Overall, it is assessed that the eradication campaign in 2012 is indicative of expanding rule of law, although it risks pushing poppy cultivation into non-traditional growing areas, more than impacting overall cultivation levels.

29. The removal of Helmand Province Governor Mangal will also impact counter-narcotics efforts. Helmand Province continues to account for almost half of the poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, despite the fact that Governor Mangal successfully reduced cultivation levels by almost 40 per cent from their peak in 2008 through the use of the Helmand Food Zone programme. This programme represents the most successful counter-narcotics effort in Afghanistan to date, and has served as an example to other provincial counter-narcotics programmes. As Helmand Province has set the example for Government-wide counter-narcotics efforts, it remains to be seen if the removal of Governor Mangal will set back counter-narcotics efforts not only in Helmand Province, but also in other provinces.

30. Due to the resiliency of the narcotics trade and the fact that eradication and interdiction efforts did not remove enough opium from the market to significantly reduce narcotics productions levels, only a limited impact on insurgent revenue is expected. Unless security is maintained, corruption is addressed and the political will and capacity to conduct counter-narcotics operations is increased, poppy cultivation and opium production will likely rebound in the near future.

Governance

31. ISAF continues to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in ensuring that international resources and development assistance are not subjected to fraud and corruption. To date, ISAF has reviewed more than

$47 billion worth of contracts, debarred 126 companies (up from 120 the previous quarter) and referred an additional 32 cases to suspension/debarment officials of multiple agencies.

32. The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme continues to progress. Over the past 12 months, the number of reintegrees has increased from 2,246 to 5,044, with an additional 900 currently enrolled or in the reintegration process. ISAF continues to support the Afghan Government in order to improve capacity of the programme, principally through the provincial peace councils and the joint secretariat teams, although a lack of dedicated Government personnel resourcing means a limited capacity to deliver, and this is a reflection of the speed with which the programme was established.

33. National Peace and Unity Week took place from 19 to 26 September 2012, and improved Afghans' awareness of the High Peace Council and the joint secretariat. The week consisted of over 190 events in all 34 provinces, with the direct participation of over 20,000 Afghans. The Kabul-based events made a significant contribution to the wider international understanding of the Government's role in the peace process, while the events across the country were vital in spreading the message to local Afghans.

34. During the reporting period, Afghan institutions continued to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and made progress in putting together a public awareness campaign on violence against women, as well as in engaging with religious leaders on the issue. However, some of the implementation measures have been assessed to be quick fixes, not initiated in accordance with the spirit of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). For example, women working inside Government structures are still not being adequately supported and are often not performing the work they are trained and/or hired for.

35. In both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, gender, human rights and child rights units have been set up, but, as they have only been recently created, their effect are yet to be seen.

36. ISAF remains strongly committed to its support of monitoring and reporting of human rights violations against children by armed actors, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). An ISAF standard operating procedure has been drafted to provide additional directives and guidance on the prevention of human rights abuse against children.

Transition

37. Following President Karzai's announcement of tranche 3 earlier this year, over 75 per cent of the Afghan population now live in areas where the Afghan security forces have the lead for security. Out of the 14 tranche 3 transition ceremonies, 9 were conducted by the end of the reporting period. Planning for the next tranches continues, with the Afghan Government in the lead and ISAF assisting and facilitating, particularly to encourage the participation of non-security ministries. Combined (Afghan security forces and ISAF) transition planning teams visited each of the Regional Operational Coordination Centres in August and September and provided reports to the Transition assessments and planning conference, which was held by the Afghan Ministry of Defence in October 2012.

38. The announcement of tranche 4 is expected in December 2012, with implementation to begin in the first semester of 2013. Completion of the transition process is scheduled for the end of 2014, at which time the Afghan security forces will have full responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan.

Development

39. A provincial reconstruction team synchronization conference was held in September 2012. It hosted military and civilian representatives from ISAF, seven Afghan ministries, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, the Transition Coordination Commission, the World Bank, the United Nations, the European Union police mission, and 17 embassy representatives. The aim of the conference was to improve coordination between the stakeholders and support the contributing Government's ownership on provincial reconstruction team evolution. As provincial reconstruction teams are closing down, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative Office and ISAF will continue to support the Independent Directorate of Local Governance's lead in this process, and will encourage and assist the Independent Directorate of Local Governance to synchronize provincial reconstruction team efforts.